The Sarcee Indians OF ALBERTA



By EAGLE TAIL

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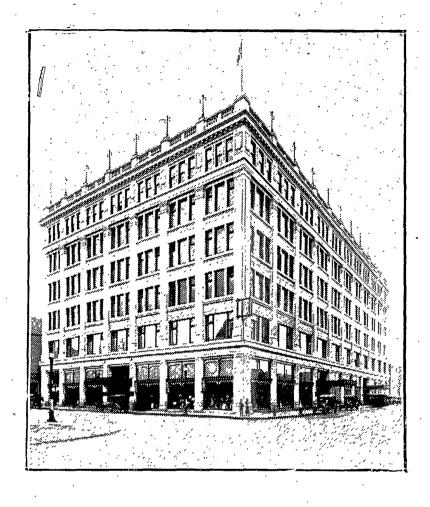
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The Sarcee Indians of Alberta

BY

ARNOLD LUPSON ("Eagle Tail")



A short account of these people by a white man adopted into the tribe, who speaks their language and is acquainted with the many customs, beliefs and stories of this primitive people.

All photographs taken by the author, on the reserve, of the Sarcees at Calgary, Alberta, Canada.

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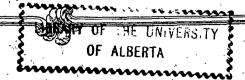
FORMER DAYS AMONG THE SARCEES

The Sarcee Indians of Southern Alberta are a division of the Beaver Tribe. Originally their home was far north of their present location, but long before the white man entered their country the



"LAME BULL," OLD DIME WARRIOR and BUFFALO HUNTER.

tribe split, one half remaining in Northern Alberta as the Beavers, the other half migrating far to the south, locating around what is now the City of Calgary. They were never at any time a numerous people, but were expert hunters and great warriors, being able to





hold their own among their many enemies. Their neighbors, the Blackfoot nation, respected them very much as warriors, to such an extent that the tribes became allied. Like most other prairie tribes they lived by the chase, the buffalo being their principal food supply,



"TWO GUNS," KEEPER OF BEAVER MEDICINE

besides using the skins for making their tepees, robes and moccasins. As the herds of buffalo moved over the plains, so the Sarcees moved with them. Other smaller animals, such as antelope, sheep and deer, were also hunted, their skins being used for fine clothing,





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which were very beautifully embroidered with the quills of the porcupine, dyed various colors. In the old days it was the woman's work to tan the skins and do the household work, while the man hunted and fought with their various enemies.



"FOX TAIL," OLD-TIME WARRIOR

RELIGION '

The principle object of worship by the Sarcees is the sun, which has the power to cure sickness and protect individuals during their travels or any troubles that may arise. In addition to the sun, charms



are worn about the person, consisting of skins of animals, feathers, bones, stones or other articles which may have appeared in a dream. These were supposed to exert a great influence against the evil spirits and oftentimes were very highly prized by their owners. The tribe



A TYPE OF SARCEE, SHOWING FASHION OF DRESSING HAIR

would also have its medicine pipes and beaver bundles which were brought out once a year and danced in the presence of all the people. The great ceremony was the Sun Dance, held in middle of summer, when the whole tribe would move away to a select spot and pitch





their tepees in a huge circle, making a very impressive sight. This important ceremony in former days would last more than a month, and was a sight to be remembered.



SARCEE MOTHER AND PAPOOSE

THE SARCEE OF TODAY

Such was the Sarcee of the old days. In two generations the savage has become a civilized member of society. Instead of the warrior mounting his cayuse as of old, he climbs into a wagon and





takes a load of young spruce trees to town for white people to plant in their gardens. Instead of a lithe bronze body racing after a herd of buffalo with bow and arrows, he sits on a small box and milks a cow. The prairies where once he could ride for days without en-



DAUGHTER OF LATE CHIEF "BIG BELLY"

countering a soul are now covered with the farms, houses and fences of his white neighbors. With the coming of the white man, so the herds of buffalo disappeared, and the old free life also disappeared. His means of subsistance gone, he too became a tarmer, and today





we find most of their able-bodied men with a farm, a bunch of cattle and horses, etc. In summer they camp out as of old, retiring to their houses when winter sets in. In spite of the fact that these people, live only eight miles from a city of 70,000 people, they cling tenac-



"RUNNING ANTELOPE," MEDICINE MAN

iously to their old customs. The medicine man still doctors the sick and their special ceremonies are performed each year as they have been for many hundreds of years past. Like most people they are







fond of amusement, and on various occasions, such as 'Stampedes," etc., they bring their tepees into town to participate, and being expert riders, are able to carry off many of the prizes.



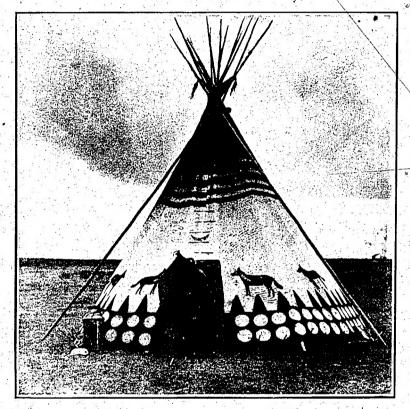
"BIG KNIFE," OWNER OF MORE THAN 300 HORSES

The Sarcees are located eight miles south-west of the City of Calgary, on a very pretty reserve, which runs west into the foothills of the Rocky Mountains. Here the last of these people, 150 all told,





are making a stand against the steadily advancing influx of white settlers. Their old life gone, they are fast becoming citizens, and a few more years will find the old-time Sarcee gone forever.



TYPICAL SARGEE TEPEE

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